

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of updating software resident on a first plurality of computing devices each having a first interface that is connectable to a first network, the first network having
 5 a first address at which an updated version of the software is resident, the method comprising the steps of:

determining, through a first Bluetooth message, the existence of a first subset, if any, of the devices on which a non-updated version of the software is resident;

informing each device in the first subset, through a second Bluetooth message, of the first address; and

commanding each device in the first subset, through a third Bluetooth message, to download the updated version from the first address.

2. A method as defined in claim 1, in which the first plurality of devices form part of a larger second plurality of devices each having the first interface, and in which the method further comprises the step, prior to the determining step, of interrogating the second plurality of devices with a Bluetooth inquiry to seek responses from devices that contain the software, whereby only the first plurality of devices respond to such inquiry.

3. A method of updating software resident on a first plurality of computing devices each having a first interface for establishing a Bluetooth connection and a second interface that is connectable to a first network, the first network having a first location at which an updated version of the software is resident, the method comprising the steps of:

establishing a Bluetooth connection to each device in the first plurality through its associated first interface;

transmitting a Bluetooth message to each device in the first plurality to determine a first subset, if any, of the devices on which a non-updated version of the software is resident;

informing each device in the first subset, through its Bluetooth connection, of the first address; and

commanding each device in the first subset, through its Bluetooth

connection, to download the updated version from the first network via its second interface.

4. A method as defined in claim 3, in which the first plurality of devices form part of a larger second plurality of devices each having the first and second interfaces, and in which the method further comprises the step, prior to the establishing step, of interrogating the second plurality of devices with a Bluetooth inquiry to seek responses from devices that contain the software, whereby only the first plurality of devices respond to such inquiry.

5. A method as defined in claim 3, in which the steps of the method are executed with a handheld Bluetooth terminal.

6. A method as defined in claim 3, further comprising the step of terminating the Bluetooth connection to each device that is not part of the first subset.

7. A method as defined in claim 3, in which the method further comprises the step of subdividing the first subset into groups of no more than X devices each, and in which the instructing step is accomplished sequentially group by group.

8. A method as defined in claim 7, in which $X=7$.

9. A method as defined in claim 3, in which the informing step is accomplished sequentially group by group in timed relation to the commanding step.

10. A method as defined in claim 3, further comprising the step of terminating the respective Bluetooth connections to the devices of each group after execution of the commanding step associated with that group.

11. A method as defined in claim 3, further comprising the steps of placing the devices of each group in a Bluetooth PARK mode prior to the start of the commanding step associated with that group, and placing such devices in a Bluetooth active mode at the

start of the associated commanding step.

12. For use with a system comprising a first plurality of computing devices each having at a first software package resident thereon, each device further having a first Bluetooth interface and a second interface that is connectable via a non-Bluetooth transmission path to a first network, the first network having a first address at which an updated version of the first software package is resident:

a terminal for establishing a Bluetooth connection with the first interface of each device in the first plurality, the terminal comprising, in combination, means for determining a first subset, if any, of the devices on which a non-updated version of the first software package is resident; means for informing each device in the first subset of the first address; and means for commanding each device in the first subset to download, via its second interface, the updated version from the first address.

13. A terminal as defined in claim 12, further comprising means for transmitting a Bluetooth inquiry to seek responses from devices that contain the first software package.

14. A terminal as defined in claim 12, further comprising means for subdividing the first subset into groups of no more than X devices each.

15. A terminal as defined in claim 12, further comprising means for terminating the respective Bluetooth connections to the devices of each group.

16. A terminal as defined in claim 12, further comprising means for selectively placing the devices of each group in a Bluetooth PARK mode and in a Bluetooth active mode, respectively.